

Update from the Department of Early Learning

June 2011

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

I have my running shoes on—do you?

In late May, the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services announced a new \$500 million competitive federal grant, which they're calling Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge.

The grants are meant to support states in implementing “bold and comprehensive” state plans for improving early learning program quality.

The early learning community in Washington is ready to compete! We are awaiting more details on the application process (which will be a quick one—the grants will be awarded and obligated by December 31, 2011).

We will share information on our website as it becomes available. With our state Early Learning Plan (www.del.wa.gov/plan) as our guide, I am confident that Washington will deliver a strong application that reflects input and support from around our state.

The 2011 Legislature adjourned on May 25 after a tough session (including a special session). You can find a legislative recap inside starting on page 2. Our Governor and Legislature clearly prioritized our state's youngest learners, and made decisions that help us take major steps forward on implementing our state Early Learning Plan.

From funding the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) to enhancing our child care licensing system, this was a year of budget and policy decisions that support healthy, safe and high-quality early learning opportunities for families around the state! We in the early learning community should be proud of our hard work and ongoing passion.

—*Bette Hyde, Director*

Third annual Starting Strong Institute to be held in Spokane August 11 and 12

This year's Starting Strong Institute will be in Spokane August 11 and 12, and will bring together the early learning world and the K-12 system to better meet the needs of our youngest learners. Starting Strong brings together parents, providers, preschool teachers, kindergarten teachers and school leadership each year to learn and share ideas about enhancing learning and transitions from prekindergarten through grade 3.

The institute is sponsored by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, Department of Early Learning, Thrive by Five Washington, and Northeast Educational Service District #101.

Participants will get examples and strategies on how to engage other early learning partners, align instruction and standards for learning across the systems, and build smooth transitions for families and children as they enter kindergarten and the K-12 system. Teams of early learning providers and elementary school staff are encouraged to attend and will receive a registration discount. Find information about registration online www.esd101.net/startingstrong



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2011 legislative wrap-up

The 2011 Legislature adjourned from their special session on May 25. Following are important early learning highlights from legislative session. This is not an exhaustive analysis of these bills—these are quick summaries of some of the bills’ key impacts. DEL will continue to share information about implementation of these initiatives in the coming months.

House Bill 1903

- Creates a new portable background check registry by July 1, 2012.
- Gives licensed child care employees a three-year “portable” clearance card, which they can use to work in more than one facility during those three years.
- Anyone applying for a background check for the first time starting July 1, 2012, will need to do a fingerprint check. This is different than the current process, in which only people who have lived in Washington less than three years must undergo a fingerprint check as part of the background check process.
- The registry will be built as a module in DEL’s Managed Education Registry and Information Tool (MERIT).
- The cost to build and maintain the registry will be covered by a one-time \$45 fee of current licensed providers on July 1, 2011, and ongoing fees of individuals submitting a new background check application.
- Licensed providers will be required to report resignation or termination of employees to DEL within 24 hours if it involves negative actions or criminal activity.
- By July 1, 2013, licensed providers and child care employees qualified before July 1, 2012 to have unsupervised access to children in care must submit a new background check application to DEL. This will allow us to have everyone in the new registry by July 1, 2013.
- Licensed providers may cover or share the cost of fees for employees if they choose.
- DEL, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Educational Service Districts must submit a proposal to the Legislature by December 15, 2011, outlining how we can better coordinate our common background check activities.

Senate Bill 5625

- Authorizes DEL to begin using a non-expiring child care license.
- Helps streamline monitoring visits, so there is not a full renewal visit every three years.
- Licensors still will monitor family homes at least once every 18 months, and child care centers at least once every 12 months.
- To qualify for a non-expiring license, providers must be considered “in good standing” and meet certain requirements, including:
 - Submitting annual licensing fee.
 - Submitting a declaration indicating intent to continue or cease operating a licensed program.



2011 legislative wrap-up, continued

- Submitting a declaration of compliance with all licensing rules.
- Submitting a background check application on schedule.
- Not having any valid complaints or other information in the period between monitoring visits that would cause DEL to consider whether a provider needs to move to a probationary license.
- Before issuing probationary licenses, DEL must refer the provider in writing to the child care resource and referral agency or other resource for technical assistance. DEL may issue a probationary license if after 15 working days, the provider refuses the referral or fails to respond to DEL's referral.
- If the provider accepts the referral, DEL, the provider and the TA provider will meet within 30 days to develop a plan to correct areas of noncompliance. The provider has 60 days to correct the issues before moving to a probationary license.
- None of this precludes DEL from issuing a probationary license if there is an immediate health or safety risk to children.
- SB 5625 goes into effect on July 22, 2011.

SB 5389 changes the membership of the Early Learning Advisory Council to specify that four of the Governor's appointees include: the Head Start State Collaboration Office Director or a designee; a representative of a Head Start, Early Head Start; Migrant/Seasonal Head Start or Tribal Head Start program; a representative of a local school district; and a representative of the DEL Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program or the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Section 619 of Part B.

HB 1419 allows DEL and the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) to share the results of federal fingerprint-based background checks, rather than requiring individuals to undergo the process for both DEL and DSHS if they are applying for purposes in addition to working in licensed child care (for example, someone who works in child care and also works in the evening as a home care worker).

Senate Bill 5427

- Moves forward with our state's kindergarten readiness process (the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills, or WaKIDS).
- Schools with state-funded full-day kindergarten classrooms can use WaKIDS on a voluntary basis during the 2011-2012 school year, and on a mandatory basis beginning in the 2012-2013 school year. Other schools may participate on a voluntary basis with their own funding. Schools that participated in the 2010-2011 WaKIDS pilot may participate as well.
- The bill directs DEL and OSPI to conduct a fairness and bias review of the assessment process before implementing WaKIDS.

Senate Bill 5504

- Doubles the civil penalty DEL can assess for providing unlicensed child care in a family home to \$150 per day. Center penalties remain at \$250 per day.
- Requires DEL to post online information about unlicensed providers who have not moved forward on the path to licensure within 30 days of being notified by DEL that it must be licensed.
- This bill goes into effect on July 22, 2011.

2011 legislative wrap-up, continued

Senate Bill 5172

- Allows parents or legal guardians to use unregulated drop-in child care for up to two hours per day while working on-site, if the facility is operated by a nonprofit entity that also operates a licensed child care program at that facility or at another facility.
- This bill goes into effect on July 22, 2011.

House Bill 1776

- Directs DEL to consult with the state fire marshal to address health and safety requirements for child care programs that serve school-age children and are operated in buildings that contain public or private schools that safely serve children during times in which school is in session.
- DEL will consider this issue as we review and update the school-age WACs this year.

Senate Bill 5098

- Exempts personal information for children in early learning /child care/afterschool programs operated by a public or nonprofit entity.
- Note: This bill does not go as far as we had proposed in our agency request bill, HB 1293/SB 5314, which would have exempted information for children in any early learning program.
- This bill goes into effect on July 22, 2011.

House Bill 1965 (delivered to the Governor—not yet signed)

- Would transfer the early learning functions of the Council for Children and Families (CCF) to DEL on July 1, 2012, and directs DEL and CCF to plan for that transfer.
- Would create a new public-private partnership to work on reducing the impact of adverse childhood experiences in Washington.

Senate Bill 5921 (delivered to the Governor—not yet signed)

- Would make several changes to the WorkFirst program.
- Would allow volunteer work at a parents' child care or preschool to count toward approved TANF work activities.
- Would require anyone who applies for subsidies to also seek child support enforcement services unless there is good cause not to.
- Would create an Office of Fraud and Accountability at DSHS
- Would require DEL and DSHS to report to Legislature by December 31, 2011, our recommendations for how to move to electronic attendance records for child care subsidies.

2011-2013 state operating budget highlights

- Increases ECEAP slots by using federal Child Care and Development Fund dollars.
- Implements a 3 percent cut to state employees' salaries.
- Increases licensed child care provider annual fees (\$30 for family homes, \$125 base rate for centers with a \$12 per-child capacity fee for all children after the first 12).
- Eliminates the Career and Wage Ladder program.
- Reduces DEL agency administration.
- Transfers the Medicaid Treatment Child Care program to DEL.
- Provides state funding for:
 - WaKIDS
 - Child care resource & referral services (their core services as well as culturally relevant supports for parents, family and other caregivers)
 - Home visiting services through the Home Visiting Services Account
 - Reach Out and Read

Upcoming early learning events...

June 13—Early Learning Advisory Council meeting
www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/elac/Default.aspx

June 30—Connect the Dots: An Early Learning Exchange
www.earlylearning.org/events/connect-the-dots



For more events, visit www.del.wa.gov/resources/calendar.aspx

Reminder: Take your subsidy billing training!

Licensed family home child care providers or in-home/relative providers who receive state child care subsidy payments must take subsidy billing training by June 30. This training will help providers understand how to correctly bill for subsidy payment.



The training is available in any of these ways:

1. **Online.** Go to www.childcarenet.org and click on “Child Care Subsidy Billing Training.”
2. **In class.** Call the Washington State Child Care Resource & Referral Network at 1.800.446.1114. Enter your zip code at the prompt to connect with your local resource & referral program to sign up for class.
3. **Self-paced workbook.** Call your local resource & referral program (see step 2 above) to have this workbook mailed to you.

For more information on child care subsidies, please visit the Department of Early Learning online at www.del.wa.gov/requirements/info/subsidy.aspx.

Competition for additional federal home visiting funding announced

Up to \$99 million in competitive grants to be awarded to states

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) on June 1 announced up to \$99 million in additional competitive grants to states to enhance home visiting efforts.

About \$66 million of this funding will be awarded in four-year grants to between seven and 10 states who already have made significant progress in building a high-quality home visiting program as part of an early learning system.

Washington already has received a \$1.3 million grant through the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visitation Programs (MIECHV) for fiscal year 2010. An updated state plan will be submitted by June 8 as the final step in accessing funds for program implementation.

States must apply by July 1, 2011, for these additional dollars. DEL will post more information about this application process as it becomes available.

To learn more about home visiting efforts in Washington, go to the home visiting section of our website: www.del.wa.gov/development/visiting/Default.aspx

The MIECHV is part of the Affordable Care Act. For more information on MIECHV, visit the HHS Health Resources and Services Administration MIECHV web page online: <http://mchb.hrsa.gov/programs/homevisiting/>

Give your input on proposed family home child care rules

DEL has filed proposed rules for licensed family home child care. Now is your chance to give input! Here's how:

Public hearings

Saturday, June 11

11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. by video conference at:

- Renton – Educational Service District 121, Puyallup Room
800 Oaksdale Ave., S.W.
- University Center at Everett Community College – Gray Wolf Hall, Room 160
2000 Tower St.
Free parking is in lots B and C west of Gray Wolf Hall.

Wednesday, June 15

6:30 to 9 p.m. by video conference at:

- Vancouver - Educational Service District 112, Clark/Pacific Rooms
2500 N.E. 65th Ave.
- Olympia/Tumwater - Educational Service District 113
6005 Tyee Drive, S.W.

Saturday, June 18

11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Yakima – Children's Village
3801 Kern Road

Saturday, June 25

11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. by video conference at:

- Spokane – Northeast Washington Educational Service District 101
4202 S. Regal
- Pasco – Educational Service District 123, Blue Mountain Room
3918 W. Court St.

Read the draft rules online at www.del.wa.gov/laws/development/negotiated.aspx

To submit written comments:

Online: <https://apps.del.wa.gov/PolicyProposalComment/Detail.aspx>

Email: Rules@del.wa.gov

Fax: 360-725-4939

Mail: DEL Rules Coordinator
PO Box 40972
Olympia, WA 98504-0972

Deadline for written comments is midnight on Sunday, June 26.

Efforts to improve children's oral health paying off

Fewer preschoolers from low-income families in Washington have tooth decay than they did just five years ago.

That's just one of many pieces of good news in the newly released Smile Survey, conducted every five years by the state Department of Health. The Smile Survey evaluates the oral health of children in Head Start, preschool and elementary school.

The survey also found:

- Preschoolers rate of untreated tooth decay was cut in half between 2005 and 2010, from 26 percent to 13 percent.
- More children are getting dental care: 43 percent of Medicaid-enrolled children birth to 5 had care in 2009, up from 34 percent in 2009.
- Untreated tooth decay declined significantly among third graders.
- Children from low-income and minority families suffer from higher rates of tooth decay.

The nonprofit Washington Dental Service Foundation points out that our state has improved efforts to connect kids with the oral health services they need through more public/private partnerships and collaboration. Their Access to Baby and Child Dentistry (ABCD) program links Medicaid-eligible children up to age 6 to dental care. The state's Apple Health for Kids program includes dental care.

To learn more about oral health, and to find an updated oral health curriculum for pre-k through grade 12 students, visit www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/oralhealth/default.htm



Share your Washington, win a prize!

Tourism is a major economic driver and revenue generator for Washington. In 2010, tourism generated \$15.2 billion in spending and \$1 billion in tax revenue. The state Department of Commerce has launched a grassroots campaign, "Share Your Washington," to invite friends and family to visit our beautiful state.

Visit www.shareyourwashington.com by June 15 to send electronic invitations and be entered into a drawing for a grand prize.

